

Iowa Department on Aging

Director Donna Harvey

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Iowa Department on Aging to Participate in March for Meals Campaign

*Iowa Department on Aging Encourages Iowans to Volunteer for Their Local Nutrition Program
by Delivering Meals to Older Iowans at Home or Helping Serve Meals at a Senior Meal Site*

(Des Moines, IA) – In conjunction with the National *March for Meals* campaign, today Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) Director, Donna Harvey, announced that IDA will be participating in the national 2011 *March for Meals* campaign and encouraged Iowans to help their local *Nutrition Program for Older Iowans* by delivering meals to older citizens in their community or helping serve meals at a local senior meal site.

March for Meals is a national campaign, initiated and sponsored by Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA), to raise awareness of senior hunger and to encourage action on the part of the local community. Senior nutrition programs across the United States, like our *Nutrition Program for Older Iowans*, promote *March for Meals* in their local communities through public events, partnerships and volunteer recruitment.

Director Harvey stated, "Volunteers are the reason nutrition programs work effectively, and more volunteers are needed in every corner of the state. If someone is interested in volunteering at a congregate meal site, or delivering meals, they should contact their local Area Agency on Aging toll free at 1-866-468-7887 or log onto the website www.i4a.org."

In 2010, over 1.2 million meals were delivered to over 14,000 older Iowans and over 1.5 million meals were served to over 41,000 older Iowans at congregate meal sites. Most of the meals delivered were done so by volunteers. Volunteers are essential to the success of local nutrition programs. Iowa senior nutrition programs keep older Iowans healthier, thereby increasing their quality of life and helping them remain more independent and in their own homes.

A major aspect of the 2011 March for Meals campaign is for Americans to team up with their local *Meals on Wheels* program and take the pledge to end senior hunger in America by 2020. This national initiative comes at a good time, as the Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA) research studies have revealed that the problem of senior hunger in America is indeed growing. Currently, one in nine seniors is at risk of hunger in the United States.

According to the latest (2008) study, Iowa ranks 41st out of 51 states among nation's most hungry citizens, with 3.95% of older Iowans at risk of hunger. Mississippi ranks first with the most seniors at risk of hunger at 12.29% and North Dakota ranks last with the fewest seniors at risk at 1.53% of older citizens at risk for hunger.

Congregate meal services were established in 1972 and home-delivered meal services were established in 1978. Both programs serve to help older citizens eat more balanced, healthier meals and also brings the very important aspect of socializing to those who remain at home and are visited by volunteers delivering their meals, and those who go to a senior center meal site for their meals.

To access the entire 2008 MOWAA report on senior hunger titled "*The Causes, Consequences, and Future of Senior Hunger in America*", click on: <http://216.235.203.153/Document.Doc?id=13>
. To access the latest addendum to the study titled "*Senior hunger in the United States: Differences Across States and Rural and Urban Areas*", click on:
<http://www.mowaa.org/hungerbystate> .

For more information on the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) go to: <http://www.aging.iowa.gov/>
. To find out local resources for older adults and people with disabilities, visit:
<http://www.lifelonglinks.org/> .

The mission of the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) is to provide advocacy, educational, and prevention services to help Iowans remain independent as they age. IDA administers over 32 million dollars in services and supports through a network of 13 Area Agencies on Aging across the state.

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